

REMARKS

Claims 1-13, 15-18, 20, 21, 24-29, 32-37, 39-47 and 50-66 are pending prior to entering this amendment. The examiner rejects claims 1-13, 15-18, 20, 21, 24-29, 32-37, 39-47 and 50-65 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Michel (U.S. Patent Number 6,215,562) variously in view of Spence (U.S. Patent Number 5,333,069), Sawano (U.S. Patent Number 6,384,895), Yamaguchi (U.S. Patent Number 6,788,431), and Housel (U.S. Patent Application Publication US2003/0164960).

Applicant amends claim 1, cancels claims 18, 20-21, 23-29, 32-37, 39-47, 50-62, and 65-66, and adds claims 67-70. Claims 1-13, 15-17, 63-64, and 67-70 remain after entering this amendment. Applicant adds no new matter and requests reconsideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

The examiner objects to claim 66 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that claim 66 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant elects to rewrite claim 66 into independent base claim 1 with intervening claim 65, which places claim 1 and its corresponding dependent claims in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The examiner rejects claims 1-13, 15-18, 20, 21, 24-29, 32-37, 39-47 and 50-65 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miehel variously in view of Spence, Sawano, Yamaguchi, and Housel. Applicant cancels claims 18, 20-21, 23-29, 32-37, 39-47, 50-62, and 65-66 and amends claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 66 and intervening claim 65, which places the application in condition for allowance. Applicant, therefore, requests that the examiner withdraw the claim rejections and allow the application to issue.

New Claims

Applicant adds claims 67-70, which directly and indirectly depend from allowable independent claim 1 (now rewritten to include the allowable subject-matter of claim 66), and therefore are allowable for the same rationale used by the examiner in the allowance of claim 66.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of all claims of the application as amended is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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